

but do it quickly enough so that the people of California have some chance of having an honest debate. It isn't just history that people are deprived of; very often they are deprived of what the facts are on the issues they're debating. So all they can do is go on what they think their basic values are and their basic instincts.

And we get so caught up—and, believe me, I share the frustration that Dr. Franklin said about what the voters don't know. It's very hard to pierce through the public consciousness and to do a sustained public education campaign in the absence of some great conflict.

I'll never forget, 10 days before our congressional debacle in 1994, a man I didn't know very well who was a pollster just spontaneously sent me this survey he did—or at least I wasn't working with him at the time—and I was shocked. He said, "Here are 10 things that, if all the voters knew them, would change the outcome of this congressional election, which is about to be terrible for you, if they just knew"—maybe there were eight things on the list. But anyway, there were more than five things that we had done that absolutely nobody knew about. So this is a generic problem in a society as big and complex as ours, being bombarded from all edges.

But I just ask you to think about that. Suppose we did that with health care. Suppose we did that with education. For example, on the education issue, some people say, well, maybe this 10 percent solution that Texas adopted would work on the affirmative action. Well, the

answer is it might well work in most States for admission to college, but it wouldn't do anything on the graduate school front. So what's your answer on graduate school?

There are a lot of these things that I'd just like to see—I'd like to see more, instead of just throwing barricades over the wall at one another, if we could start with what the problem is and work back, I really believe we can make an enormous amount of progress in this country, because most Americans who get caught in the middle on these referendums, where their values are pulling them one way and you're trying to—and the rhetoric is pulling them one way, and you're trying to cram information in as quick as you can before election time comes and all that kind of stuff. Most Americans really don't like the fact that we have disparate outcomes, and most Americans think anybody that's working hard and needs a hand up ought to get it, to have a fair chance.

So I think, to go back to what you said about talking to the Speaker on this issue, I think I'm going to try to follow this tack in dealing with our friends who disagree with us on so much. Let's see if we can't start with that and work back and see how much agreement we can make. I think we may do better than people think.

Thank you. This was great.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. The meeting was part of "One America: The President's Initiative on Race."

## Statement on Lifting the Medicare Home Health Provider Moratorium *January 13, 1998*

Medicare is more than just another program. For millions of Americans, it is a lifeline. Maintaining the integrity of that lifeline has long been a top priority of this administration.

Last September I announced that the Department of Health and Human Services was declaring the first ever moratorium to stop new home health providers from entering the Medicare program. We took this unprecedented action to give the administration the opportunity to implement new regulations to create protections to

screen out providers who are likely to cheat Medicare.

Today I am announcing that the Department is removing the moratorium because those new, tougher regulations are in place to root out fraud and abuse in the home health industry. These regulations will help keep the bad apples—the providers who commit fraud and abuse—out of the home health industry. These actions—combined with other antifraud initiatives and other savings initiatives—have helped

slow the growth of home health spending. In fact, the Medicare actuary now reports that the rate of increase in Medicare spending on home health has slowed to just 5.4 percent from previous rates that exceeded 25 percent.

These efforts to root fraud and abuse out of the home health industry build on my administration's longstanding efforts to combat fraud and abuse. Since 1993, we have assigned more Federal prosecutors and FBI agents to fight health care fraud than ever before. As a result, convictions have gone up a full 240 percent, and we have saved some \$20 billion in health care claims. The Kassebaum-Kennedy legislation I signed into law created—for the first time

ever—a stable funding source to fight fraud and abuse. This year's historic Balanced Budget Act, which ensured the life of the Medicare Trust Fund until at least 2010, also gave us an array of new weapons in our fight to keep scam artists and fly-by-night health care providers out of Medicare and Medicaid.

I would like to thank the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice for their efforts to combat fraud and abuse in the home health industry.

We will continue to work to ensure that we do everything possible to combat fraud and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus January 13, 1998

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)*

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1 to November 30, 1997. The previous submission covered events in the period covering August 1 to September 30, 1997.

U.S. diplomacy to advance progress toward a Cyprus settlement continued at an intense pace during the reporting period. Special Presidential Emissary for Cyprus Richard C. Holbrooke, Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas J. Miller, and other U.S. officials met in the United States and overseas with key participants in the process. Ambassadors Holbrooke and Miller met extensively with Cypriot President Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash during their visits to the United States. The two U.S. Envoys also traveled to the region in October to meet with the Turkish and (in the case of Ambassador Miller) Greek leadership to follow up on discussions begun with Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright at the U.N. General Assembly in September, and again in November when Ambassador Holbrooke brought the two Cypriot leaders together in the buffer zone for an informal exchange of views on achieving a Cyprus solution.

Also during November, Ambassador Holbrooke moderated a privately sponsored con-

ference of business leaders from both Cypriot communities in Greece and Turkey to discuss the mutual benefits of the economic cooperation in the region. Ambassador Miller and U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Kenneth C. Brill also participated.

Senior U.S. officials met extensively during the reporting period with officials of the European Union, EU member states, and others to support Cypriot EU accession prospects and to encourage stronger EU-Turkish relations.

Tensions rose on the island during the October and November (respectively) Greek/Greek Cypriot military exercise NIKIFOROS and the Turkish/Turkish Cypriot military exercise TOROS. The exercises effectively ended the May 9 moratorium on overflights of Cyprus by combat aircraft. Interceptions by Turkish fighters of the Greek Defense Minister's transport aircraft during the NIKIFOROS exercise further exacerbated tensions in the region.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.